

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JOHANN 00161 271754Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5537
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T JOHANNESBURG 0161

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, RH, TA
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT NYERERE'S REACTION TO SMITH'S REJECTION OF
BRITISH PROPOSALS ON RHODESIA

1. ACCORDING TO IVOR RICHARD, PRESIDENT NYERERE TOLD THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER IN DAR ES SALAAM THAT HE WAS GLAD IAN SMITH HAD REJECTED THE BRITISH PROPOSALS AS NOW THE NATIONALIST FORCES COULD GET ON WITH THE WAR FOR THE COMPLETE LIBERATION OF RHODESIA. EMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM MAY ALREADY HAVE OBTAINED MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE MEETING FROM THE BRITISH HICOM.

2. RICHARD FOUND NYERERE'S POSITION MOST DISAPPOINTING AND NOT A LITTLE PUZZLING, GIVEN NYERERE'S MORE FAVORABLE ATTITUDE WHEN RICHARD LAST SAW HIM. AS A RESULT OF NYERERE'S STRONG POSITION AGAINST THE PROPOSALS NOW, LONDON AT ONE POINT INSTRUCTED RICHARD THAT HE SHOULD SEE PRESIDENT KAUNDA WHEN HE VISITS LUSAKA BUT NOT NYERERE. ALTHOUGH RICHARD DOES NOT THEREFORE PLAN TO SEE NYERERE, HE IS NONETHELESS INCLINED TO WONDER WHETHER A FURTHER TALK WOULD NOT BE USEFUL.

3. COMMENT: NYERERE'S SEEMINGLY CHANGED POSITION DOES SEEM
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STRANGE, IF NOT ERRATIC, BUT BOTH GRENNAN AND MANSFIELD BELIEVE NYERERE HAS BECOME MORE RADICAL IN HIS APPROACH TO RHODESIA AND WANTS TO SEE THE INTRODUCTION OF A GOVERNMENT UNDER LEADERS WHO COME FROM AMONG THE MEN WITH THE GUNS. THEY ADMIT THAT THIS SEEMS INCONSISTENT WITH HIS PAST DISLIKE FOR MILITARY MEN IN POLITICS. ON THE OTHER HAND, MAYBE THIS DISLIKE APPLIES ONLY TO PROFESSIONAL

SOLDIERS AS OPPOSED TO THOSE WHO ARISE FROM THE GRASS ROOTS OF A LIBERATION STRUGGLE. GRENNAN POINTED OUT THAT NYERERE HAD ORIGINALLY SAID THE KISSINGER INITIATIVE WAS PREMATURE AND THAT MORE TIME WAS NEEDED FOR THE GUERRILLAS TO WEAR SMITH DOWN.

4. ALTHOUGH THE BRITISH MAY BE WISE IN NOT HAVING RICHARD SEE NYERERE AT THE MOMENT, ESPECIALLY WHEN EACH CONVERSATION SEEMS TO GENERATE ANOTHER PRESS CONFERENCE, IT MIGHT NONETHELESS BE WISE TO FOLLOW UP WITH NYERERE BEFORE TOO LONG, AS HIS INITIAL REACTION MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. IT IS TRUE THAT NYERERE SAID EARLIER THAT THE KISSINGER INITIATIVE WAS PREMATURE. ON THE OTHER HAND, NYERERE PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE EARLIER VICTORIA FALLS INITIATIVE AND STILL SHOWS SIGNS OF WANTING A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IF ONE CAN BE OBTAINED. ADMITTEDLY, HE MAY WANT SUCH SETTLEMENT ON HIS OWN SPECIAL TERMS IF POSSIBLE, BUT THERE DOES APPEAR TO BE ROOM FOR NEGOTIATION, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT NYERERE'S REACTION TO SMITH'S REJECTION OF THE BRITISH PROPOSALS IS AT LEAST PARTIALLY A FUNCTION OF THE TREMENDOUS HATRED AND DISTRUST OF SMITH'S "TRICKERY" THAT HAS INCREASED WITH EACH FAILURE OF EACH EFFORT TO DEAL WITH SMITH. IT MAY BE THAT NYERERE'S REPORTED HAPPINESS AT THE REJECTION OF BRITAIN'S PROPOSALS IS SIMPLY A REFLECTION OF NYERERE'S BELIEF THAT SMITH WILL NEVER EVER MAKE AN HONEST AGREEMENT AND OF HIS RELIEF, THEREFORE, THAT THE AFRICANS WILL NOT BE CAUGHT UP IN AN AGREEMENT SMITH IS BOUND TO VIOLATE. IN SHORT IT MAY BE LESS THE BRITISH PROPOSALS THAT NYERERE OBJECTS TO THAN THE DANGER THAT THEY COULD BE USED BY SMITH TO
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RETAIN WHITE POWER OR AT LEAST TO SHAPE AN INDEPENDENT RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT ALONG LINES THAT WOULD BE MORE "NEOCOLONIAL" AND CONSERVATIVE THAN NYERERE WANTS TO SEE. EMBASSY DAR MAY WANT TO ADD FURTHER COMMENT.
JOHNSON

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